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February 27, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

I write to urge you to swiftly bring the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2019, H.R.269, to the Senate floor for a vote. This legislation, recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, reauthorizes and strengthens the Pandemic All-Hazards Preparedness Act (PAHPA). Last year, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee approved very similar legislation.

IDSAs represents over 11,000 infectious diseases physicians, other clinical staff and scientists. Many of our members work on the frontlines of public health emergencies, including bioterror attacks, outbreaks, and natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes that carry significant infectious diseases risks). It is imperative that Congress approve PAHPAI quickly in order to modernize our approach to public health preparedness, provide essential resources for communities and health care facilities to prepare for and respond to public health threats, and support the research and development (R&D) of life-saving medical countermeasures (including vaccines, diagnostics, and antimicrobial drugs).

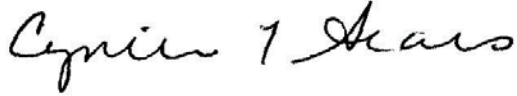
In particular, IDSAs is pleased to offer our strong support for the provision in H.R. 269 to reinstate loan repayment authority for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to improve programs that train public health responders and future leaders, such as the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS). A successful response to a public health emergency depends upon skilled personnel. Section 301 of H.R. 269 will strengthen the ability of the CDC to recruit physicians to serve in the EIS—a fellowship program that trains expert responders to infectious disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies. This important provision was also added to the most recent version of PAHPAI that was released by the Senate HELP Committee in 2018.

IDSAs remains deeply concerned about antimicrobial resistance that threatens our national health security. We appreciate language in Section 404 authorizing the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority to undertake strategic initiatives to address antimicrobial resistance, as well as Section 505 that codifies the Advisory Council on Combating Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria.

Last year's Senate version of PAHPAI similarly sought to strengthen BARDA efforts to respond to antimicrobial resistance.

Once again, IDSA thanks you for your dedication to our nation's health security. We look forward to continuing to work with you on these crucial issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia Sears". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cynthia Sears, MD, FIDSA
President, IDSA